

David A. Cole Takes Reins as MaineDOT Commissioner

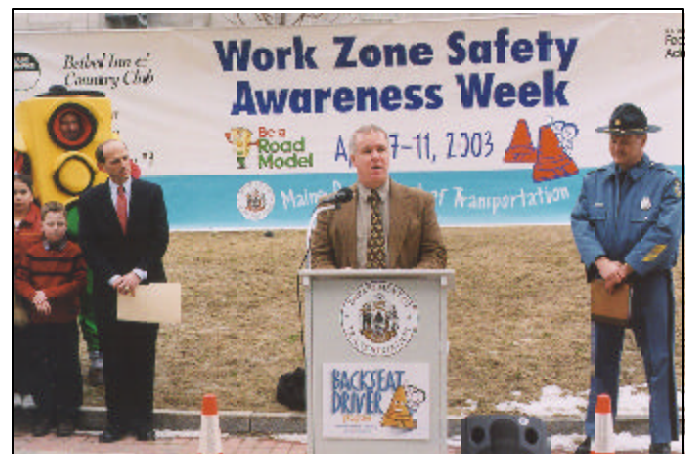


On March 14, 2003, David A. Cole of Brewer was sworn in as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation. Following are several excerpts from the new Commissioner's confirmation hearing before the Maine Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

"I grew up in the northern Maine mill-town of Lincoln. Typical of the era, my father worked in the paper mill, while my mother managed our family of eight, with 'the mill' being our sole source of income. My first big economics lesson was drilled into me in 1968, when, at age 13, Eastern Fine Paper closed its doors, putting 700 people out of work, and impacting virtually everyone in the area—eerily reminiscent of what's happening today in the Millinocket area. I still remember well the worry and uncertainty hanging over the community, as well as all the talk of moving to Connecticut in order to find work... In the end, the community pulled together, and with state and federal help, a buyer was found and the mill re-opened after six months."

"At age 24, I went to work for a nonprofit development organization, Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), headquartered in Bangor. And now, at age 48, I sit here before you today reflecting on the half a lifetime I've dedicated to improving the standard and quality of living in the six-county region that we call Eastern Maine...I believe I can add value at Maine DOT through my 24 years of ground-level work at the local and regional levels of Maine, where public policy meets the reality of what businesses and communities can actually achieve. Through my career, I have learned many lessons and gained new skills that I think would be useful in the role of Commissioner."

"Starting out as an Economic Development Specialist, I focused on developing economic development strategies for our region, and setting priorities and pursuing funds for federal infrastructure projects through regional advisory groups made up of public and private interests. I quickly learned there are always many more needs than resources, and that to be successful, you must be able to develop meaningful standards, effectively identify the high-potential projects, focus time and effort on what will work, and have the persistence and patience to get the job done."



MaineDOT Safety Management Section

"Since 1996, I've had the honor of serving as President and Chief Executive Officer of EMDC. Over this time, I have led an effort to better focus our strategic thinking and programmatic efforts on the concept of 'economic community.' We believe that for a region to compete in today's economy, there must be an effective meshing of business and community assets, and regions like ours will only move ahead with the true partnering of private and public interests."

"The foundation of these efforts is rooted in planning—including land-use, transportation, and economic-development planning, all of which are inextricably intertwined. These activities set the platform for business and community development, as efficient and wise use of our natural, physical, and human resources is central to all progress. We've worked extensively with

dozens of communities in the planning and implementation of critical infrastructure projects, many of which are transportation-related, that support our economic vitality and quality of life.”

“...a balanced transportation system that efficiently connects us to the global community is fundamental to our long-term economic survival.”

“I am interested in this position because I believe that Maine’s transportation system plays a critical role in our economic well being, particularly going forward. Despite the pronouncements of some that in the ‘Internet Age’ location no longer matters, I would suggest just the opposite: location and connectivity are more critical than ever, and will continue to drive both business and personal investment decisions. Having a balanced transportation system that efficiently connects us to the global community is fundamental to our long-term economic survival. In short, transportation is economic development, but it must be transportation that favors our changing economic and social landscape.”

Commissioner Cole holds a Bachelors Degree in Public Management and a Masters of Public Administration from the University Maine at Orono. Cole, his wife Karen, and twin sons Alex and Jonny, make their home in Brewer.



MaineDOT Office of Passenger Transportation

“Safe Ways to School” Report Hits the Street

MaineDOT recently released the results of a comprehensive, federally funded research project to determine existing rates of bicycling and walking to school in Maine. The “Maine – Safe Ways to School” project was initiated with the expectation that the results will be

useful in developing policies and practices, both state and local, to promote bicycling and walking to schools. Trends toward increased obesity and physical inactivity are inversely related to declining rates of biking and walking. The study revealed that just five percent of the overall student population walks or bikes to school during fair weather. From a transportation and public health policy perspective, MaineDOT and other agencies have a common interest in identifying the infrastructure, policy, and programmatic causes of these conditions, as well as a common goal of helping to reverse the trends. Four school districts with a combined population of 5,500 students were selected for the study. A baseline survey of methods of travel to school, and attitudes about biking and walking, was followed by analysis conducted by the University of Maine Center for Research and Evaluation. The final report includes a full summary of the project process, findings, recommendations, and implementation measures, including infrastructure improvements, promotional events and policy, and practice changes at the local and state-agency and administrative level. The report is available online at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/opt/bike/> or by calling the MaineDOT Office of Passenger Transportation at 207-624-3252.

“511” System Now Live for Maine Travelers

With a live demonstration for Governor John E. Baldacci, Maine’s “511” traveler information system became operational on May 15th. The system provides real-time information about highway conditions, major delays, construction and closures, weather, and tourism through a three-digit voice-response phone number, as well as online at www.511maine.gov. Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire, launched their 511 systems simultaneously, having developed the project in cooperation with five other states, with support from the Federal Highway Administration. Other MaineDOT partners in development of the system include the Office of Tourism, the Maine Turnpike Authority, and Acadia National Park.



The Maine Traveler is available on the MaineDOT website at:
http://www.state.me.us/mdot/maine_traveler/homepage.htm

To send comments or order extra paper copies, call 624-3253, or send an e-mail to: Maine.DOT@maine.gov



MaineDOT Environmental Office

Scenic Byways Bring in Federal Grants

The Federal Highway Administration will send \$527,000 in federal funding to the Maine Scenic



MAINE
SCENIC BYWAYS

Byways Program in 2003, for improvements to four scenic byways and roads in rural and western Maine. "This money will help advance tourism and the economic development potential of rural Maine communities located on Scenic

Byways," said MaineDOT Commissioner David A. Cole. The funding will be used to improve access to recreational trails and begin planning work for an interpretive center on the Old Canada Road Scenic Byway; to promote tourism and make improvements on the Schoodic Scenic Byway at Taunton Bay and Prospect Harbor; to fund acquisition of frontage near Grafton Notch State Park on the Route 26 Scenic Byway; and to promote tourism and help preserve historical, cultural, and natural assets on the Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway. Signs sporting a new logo will start appearing on Maine's byways this summer.

MaineDOT, PUC Launch Joint Signal Program

In February, Governor John E. Baldacci announced a program to help improve the energy efficiency of traffic signals throughout the state. A \$200,000 grant from the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is funding the MaineDOT-administered program, which helps municipa-



lities retrofit traffic signals from incandescent light to energy-saving LED-based signals. Until now, the high initial cost of the LED lighting had prevented many commu-

nities from taking advantage of the program. But investment in the program will be recovered handily through reduced energy costs, creating \$3 in savings for every

\$1 spent over the life of a bulb. Maintenance costs are also lower. To date, 48 towns have applied for the program and ordered more than 3700 bulbs going to some 230 intersections, for an estimated savings of 1.6 million kilowatt hours per year. The Traffic Signal Replacement Program is one of several programs implemented in response to an energy-efficiency law enacted by the Maine Legislature in 2002. For information about the program, call the MaineDOT Community Services Division, at 207-624-3266.

Department Running Cleaner Trucks

MaineDOT's Bureau of Maintenance and Operations recently put on the road 50 patrol trucks which exceed minimum allowed air quality standards, 25 of which use "best-available" clean diesel standards. These trucks will provide more than five tons of nitrous oxide (NOx) reductions per year—the same NOx benefits (asthma benefits) as 65 park-and-ride lots or 32 natural-gas-fueled transit buses. The new trucks are also outfitted with dashboard technologies that will allow for management and minimization of unnecessary vehicle idling.

MaineDOT Employee of the Month

March 2003

Ray Faucher

Manager – BTIP and Major Project Division



In 1979, Ray Faucher began his MaineDOT career as an *Engineering Technician I*. Over the years he rose through the ranks to become a *Tech III*, a *Tech IV* and a *Civil Engineer (CE) I, II and III* and he is now a *Manager* in the Bureau of Planning. Ray is well-known throughout the state as the Department's most seasoned project location planner, and he is presently overseeing several major planning studies in every corner of Maine. His nomination for *Employee of the Month* explains, "He not only demonstrates a mastery of complex federal and state legislation internally, but he distinguishes himself as a professional, and enhances MaineDOT's reputation through his ability to explain these issues to the public...Like many MaineDOT employees, Ray is good at his job and is a strong asset to the Department. However, his courtesy and determination to always go the extra mile is what sets Ray apart..."

MaineDOT Employees of the Month



April 2003

Rick Gradie

*Highway Worker II
Division 4 - Fairfield*

Rick Gradie began working at MaineDOT as a *Bridge Maintenance Worker I* in 1987. He was also a *Highway Laborer* and he is currently a *Highway Worker II* in Division 4. The many compliments on his nomination include: "If you worked here and observed daily the vast number of tasks Rick does, you'd agree he's like a single crew all rolled into one person...Rick will never refuse to help with the smallest of tasks to the more complicated of tasks...He will never mention that it may be outside the realm of his day-to-day responsibility...There does not seem to be anything Rick cannot do and everything he does, he does top notch...Because of his versatility in doing so many things, any miscellaneous task in Division 4 will be done with perfection at minimal cost..."



May 2003

Nate Kane

*GIS Coordinator
Bureau of Planning*

Nate Kane started work for MaineDOT as a *Transportation Planning Analyst* in 2000, and is currently a *Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator* in the Systems Management Division of the Bureau of Planning. Nate's nomination, submitted by 15 of his co-workers, strongly commends him for his skills and work ethic: "...an integral part of transportation planning... His work transforms complicated data into descriptive maps that are instrumental...He consistently goes the extra mile to help both fellow employees and constituents with their GIS needs and requests...He has the knowledge, skill, patience and kindness that make him a perfect candidate for *EOM*, and a fantastic co-worker." The Department uses GIS technology extensively to display data sets in a spatial form on maps.

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